

BEAVERTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 6, 2013

**APPROVED**

**CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

Chairman Conway called the Traffic Commission meeting to order in the Forrest C. Soth City Council Chamber, 4755 SW Griffith Drive, Beaverton, Oregon, on Thursday, June 6, 2013 at 7:00 pm and called the roll.

Traffic Commissioners present included Ernie Conway, Paul Cohen, John Herring, Bill Berg, Brad McClean.

City of Beaverton staff included City Transportation Engineer, Jabra Khasho, Police Traffic Sergeant Steve Schaer and Traffic Commission Recorder, Teri Cunningham.

**VISITORS**

No one from the audience came forward to speak.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Mr. Khasho has no comments.

**CONSENT**

Chairman Conway reviewed the consent agenda comprised of the March 7, 2013, draft meeting minutes. There were no changes to the minutes.

Commissioner McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Cohen to approve the March 7, 2013, meeting minutes as written.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Berg, Cohen, Conway, and Herring voted AYE. Commissioner McClean abstained as he was excused from the June meeting. The MOTION CARRIED (4:0)

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Issue TC 707: Pedestrian Beacon on SW Nimbus Avenue at Stratus Street**

Chairman Conway opened the public hearing regarding TC 707.

***Staff Report***

Mr. Khasho said that City staff have received several phone calls regarding safety at the marked crosswalk on Nimbus Avenue at Stratus Street from employees and business owners on or near that location. He said the folks called in to voice concern about drivers failing to yield for pedestrians when they cross at that location, which is usually to get to the shopping centers or restaurants on the east side.

Mr. Khasho said that Nimbus Avenue is classified as a 3-lane collector street with one through lane in each direction and a two-way left turn. Mr. Khasho said there are marked crosswalks at the intersection, one on the south side on Nimbus, the other on Stratus, which is the west side of the intersection. Across from Stratus, there is a driveway to a shopping center. Nimbus Avenue carries approximately 9,675 vehicles per day based on a count done in 2012.

Mr. Khasho said that the crash reports for the last three available years show that there have been three crashes at this intersection, but none were pedestrian involved. Two were right-angle turns, the third was a rear-end crash.

Mr. Khasho said that recently the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) gave interim approval for the use of rectangular rapid flashing beacons, which are installed below the Pedestrian Crossing sign. The beacon has a push button that the pedestrian activates when crossing the street. They beacons are yellow LED lights that flash twice per second, which is very rapid compared to circular beacons that are overhead or over signs.

Mr. Khasho said that studies on the rectangular flashing beacons show upper 80s to almost 100 per yielding rates for this kind of beacon. There were also studies done two years after installation that indicate the rate of drivers yielding is consistent. Typically, this type of beacon is used where a complete signal is not warranted and provides an effective solution for pedestrian safety. Mr.

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Khasho said staff is proposing that these rectangular beacons be installed at this crosswalk on Nimbus. There will not be beacons on Stratus because it is controlled with a STOP sign.

Mr. Khasho said that the cost to install this type of beacon is \$30,000 and will be funded from the Traffic Enhancement Fund, which was approved by the Traffic Commission and City Council at a prior meeting for Pedestrian Safety Improvements.

Commissioner McClean asked Mr. Khasho if he had any info on the approximate number of calls received concerning this issue and what the date range had been.

Mr. Khasho explained that the calls and complaints had been received over a long period of time and that he did not maintain records of them.

Chairman Conway asked if those complaining were notified that there would be a hearing.

Mr. Khasho said that signs had been posted at the location and that staff had not received any calls regarding them or the notice for public hearing. He added that the Beaverton Police did several days of enforcement at that location and while there was a police presence, there was compliance, which did not continue when there were not officers in the area.

Vice Chairman Herring asked if the traffic enhancement program included this as part of the estimated budget.

Mr. Khasho said that this location is just one of three included in that line item in the budget listed in the report itself.

Chairman Conway asked if this item would fall into the fiscal year budget for 2012/13.

Mr. Khasho said that this is a project listed in the Capital Improvement Program that will fall into the budget for the following fiscal year, 2013/14.

Commissioner Berg asked if the beacon would be visible from both directions of traffic.

Mr. Khasho said yes, the beacons would be on both sides and the signs.

***Public Testimony***

**Brian Walker, Beaverton**

Mr. Walker said that he and his wife live in the Greenway neighborhood and that the Starbucks on Nimbus is in walking distance from his home. He said that they are in favor of having the beacon installed. He mentioned that his wife was not able to attend the meeting this evening but had noticed what she described as "harried worker bees" trying to get across the street several times, as she visits the Starbucks frequently. He mentioned that he had also observed that at this particular location, there is a curve to the south that doesn't provide clear visibility to pedestrians for cars coming around the curve and vice versa. He said that from the north direction, there are always folks in a hurry who have turned off from Hall Boulevard trying to accelerate rapidly and not paying attention to pedestrians that may be trying to cross. He said it can turn into a staring match between pedestrians and automobile drivers to see if they will stop, but often drivers will blow through the intersection without paying attention to those trying to cross. He said that he had driven through that morning before lunch time and there were a number of cars parked on Stratus in addition to a number of cars coming and going and he feels this beacon would be especially beneficial for safety, especially during peak hours.

Chairman Conway asked Mr. Khasho if there were plans to install a center turn lane in southbound on Nimbus.

Mr. Khasho said that there isn't enough room to add a left turn lane for the southbound traffic on Nimbus.

Chairman Conway said that he was concerned about the sight line because a person following someone turning left may blow through and pass, which could be dangerous even with the beacon installed.

Mr. Khasho explained that the reason there is no turn-lane into the shopping center is that the turn lane going north to Hall Boulevard is too short and you cannot have back-to-back turn lanes, but you can cross a double yellow line to get into a driveway.

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Vice Chairman Herring asked Sergeant Schaer about complaints received in that particular area.

Sergeant Schaer said that he has received numerous complaints from folks in those businesses. He said that in a two hour period he believed that officers have gotten between 10 and 20 violations in that crosswalk.

Vice Chairman Herring asked if those violations are from folks going around.

Sergeant Schaer explained that when they set up operations, they use an ODOT standard and cite the folks going around the cones that have more than ample time to stop after seeing a pedestrian entering the crosswalk. He mentioned that there are also site range issues, such as geese crossing and people stopping for geese.

Chairman Conway asked if there was a plan to trim the tree back on the east corner of the intersection.

Mr. Khasho said that the site will be reviewed to make sure visibility meets the standard requirement and that there is a potential to include an additional beacon on the pedestrian sign further ahead.

**COMMISSION DELIBERATION**

Commissioner McClean said it sounds like there is a need for a beacon at this intersection and based on the info Mr. Khasho provided, there's a safety concern and this beacon will help.

Chairman Conway noted that he wished there had been stronger input from the community on this process.

Commissioner McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Cohen to approve the staff recommendation to install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons at the crosswalk on SW Nimbus Avenue at Stratus Street and the final written order as written.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Berg, Cohen, Conway, McClean and Herring voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED (5:0)

**ISSUE TC 708: Crosswalk and Pedestrian Beacon on SW Millikan Way West of Murray Boulevard**

Chairman Conway opened the public hearing regarding TC 708.

***Staff Report***

Mr. Khasho said that this issue is identical to the previous issue and that City staff has received complaints from employees in the area about the safety of crossing the street. He said that folks have difficulty crossing the street. He said that at this location there are several buildings and offices south of Millikan that people cross to have lunch or visit the shopping center. He said that there is no protection for pedestrians such as a median island, ..

Mr. Khasho said that Millikan way is classified as a collector street, but is five lanes across, two lanes in each direction and a center turn lane. He said that there is a bike lane on the north side between Murray to the end of the shopping center that was included when the center was built. The posted speed on Millikan is 35 MPH, but sometimes drivers are travelling at 40 MPH or more. Millikan carries approximately 14,850 vehicles a day, which is a significant amount of traffic on a collector street. Over the last three years, there was one crash that involved a pedestrian, who was hit while crossing the street (in February of this year).

Mr. Khasho said that the Federal Highway Administration does not recommend installing a crosswalk at a facility that carries less than 15,000 vehicles per day with a posted speed of 30 MPH or higher without adding additional enhancements to the crossing such as a median island. As he mentioned in the previous report, the MUTCD allows for the installation of rapid flashing beacons

Mr. Khasho further explained that to have a crosswalk at this location, it would have to be accompanied by additional enhancements as recommended by the studies done by the Federal Highway Administration. Mr. Khasho said to have a crosswalk at this location it would have to be accompanied by a median island and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, which will ensure that drivers are aware that pedestrians are crossing the roadway. He said that also the refuge island will narrow the view of the street to drivers, which will slow their speed. The cost to install the island, crosswalk, and beacon would be \$45,000, which would come from the

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traffic enhancement fund. This project is also on the CIP list for fiscal year 2013/14. Staff recommends installing a crosswalk, a median island, and the rectangular rapid flashing beacons.

Commissioner Cohen asked if there is an additional button in the middle of the island if a person were to get halfway across and need to activate it again.

Mr. Khasho said that at this location it might be a possibility because it has two sets of signs for each direction. One would be on the right side of the street and one on the island. A control could be added to the island. Mr. Khasho said, a pedestrian would have time to cross from one side of the street to the other without needing to activate the beacon again.

Chairman Conway asked if the law is that cars must stop until the pedestrian is in the other lane.

Sergeant Schaer said that if there is a median, then it's a lane plus six feet, or a lane and a half. If there is no median and no control, then it's the entire roadway.

Chairman Conway noted that in the drawing, it appears that there is still a left turn arrow to the east of the median, but he's wondering if you can or can't make a left turn into the shopping center.

Mr. Khasho said that the arrow will be removed.

Commissioner Berg asked if the flashing beacon is that synchronized in any way with the traffic light on Murray.

Mr. Khasho said that it is not.

Commissioner Berg said that he is concerned that the beacon might be on long enough to back up traffic on Millikan or if someone was traveling south on Murray, looking left to see if there was traffic, if traffic was backed up far enough due to the beacon, rear-end type crashes could be increased.

Mr. Khasho said that people do not turn at a high rate of speed, and drivers must yield to pedestrians, so he doesn't anticipate any problems with right turns due to installation of this beacon. He said that the distance between Murray and the crosswalk is almost 325 feet, which is adequate for the queue. He also calculated that it should take less than 25-27 seconds for a pedestrian to cross, and mentioned that as soon as the pedestrian clears the street, even if the beacon is flashing, the cars can proceed.

Chairman Conway said that when he went out, he observed that everyone went down to the west entrance, and was wondering if it's a staff recommendation that it go at that location or if it was the businesses asking because every person he saw went all the way down even though they were exiting from the corner.

Mr. Khasho said that the request that came in was at this location and the destination is typically the retail on the opposite side.

***Public Testimony***

Tom Booker, Beaverton

He is the husband of the woman struck by the car in that location in February, when she suffered a concussion, torn ligaments in her knees and other injuries. She was very frustrated that the accident had happened just after 6 in the evening and that she could and should have been seen. He said that the car appeared out of nowhere and turned the corner.

He said that in support of Commissioner Berg's concern about cars taking the corner on Murray, is exactly what happened to his wife. He said that it's very easy to come up on someone crossing very quickly. He said that he supports the crosswalk.

He said that it's a well built road and you have a clear view of traffic and would be able to see cars stopped at a pedestrian crosswalk.

Brian Walker, Beaverton

He said that he works in that area and have on occasion ridden his bike on Millikan. He said Millikan is a three lane road on the east side, one lane coming into two when they cross Murray. He has been concerned about that right turn lane because people travel

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through quickly and he has seen pedestrians have to stop abruptly because drivers will just “blow through” there. He said that one thing to consider is that perhaps instead of a yield, there should be a full stop because it is concerning. He said that he has also seen people make a turn eastbound into Millikan into the driveway even though the driveway isn’t considered to accept left turns. He said that on a bike, you have to be more aware of the volume of traffic and that being so close to Murray Boulevard, there are a lot of folks not paying proper attention, distracted with drivers coming from the left instead of what’s in front of them which in some cases is a pedestrian. There is a 7-11 and three restaurants and it is a busy intersection with high traffic that is a dangerous area, so he supports the crosswalk.

Commissioner Berg asked Mr. Walker what his opinion was of having the crosswalk next to the entrance.

Mr. Walker said that he thinks there’s a valid point about access to the shopping center, and with just two entrances, if you put the crosswalk at the other entrance, you prohibit a left turn somewhere, either for the businesses to the south or the retail businesses to the north. Also, there’s the point that folks will take the shortest path, you don’t want to go way out of your way, and the second entrance is a couple blocks away, which would mean it’s out of the way for most people needing to cross.

Commissioner Cohen asked Mr. Walker if he thinks that the median could prevent left-hand turns that are illegal now more than the actual fact that they are illegal.

Mr. Walker said that reducing the space could deter left-hand turns but not prevent them altogether.

Vice Chairman Herring asked Sergeant Schaer if there was any significant information related to the fatality on Murray that he could discuss.

Sergeant Schaer said that the pedestrian was significantly impaired but that doesn’t change the magnitude of the need for more visibility for pedestrians in that area trying to cross. This intersection is quite comparable to the one just discussed at Nimbus/Stratus, the difference being the higher speeds of the cars and the width of Millikan. He said that with the residents living in the LaSalle Apartments in that area being typically younger crowds, they are “typically heavier on the gas too” so he feels that the beacon for pedestrians will improve safety significantly.

Chairman Conway asked if City staff had considered adjusting the width of that right turn lane from Murray onto Millikan because it does have a wide turn radius. Would it help to deter concerns about it being so close to the intersection?

Mr. Khasho said that it would require reconstructing the intersection and would involve Washington County because Murray is under their jurisdiction and they maintain the island. He said that the turn radius as it is designed is to allow large trucks to turn from Murray to the industrial businesses on Millikan.

Commissioner Berg asked if the beacon would be visible from both directions.

Mr. Khasho said that yes, they would be because it’s a straight line of sight.

#### **COMMISSION DELIBERATION**

Commissioner Berg said he feels it’s a good compromise although he’s still concerned about traffic traveling south on Murray and coming around the corner being unable to see the beacon. He said that the reason he asked whether or not the beacon is visible in both directions is because he feels that someone coming around the corner would see the beacon on the left side before they’d see it on the right, so he is pleased to know it is visible from both directions.

Commissioner McClean said he agrees with Commissioner Berg based on the staff report and the traffic sergeant’s opinion in addition to the public testimony presented, there is obviously a need for improved visibility and safety for pedestrians. Having the crosswalk, the median island and the beacons will improve that visibility and he hopes that people who live in that area become aware of the pedestrian crossing they will modify their behavior and slow down when taking that corner.

Commissioner Herring said he agrees with everything that had been stated so far and added that when he had visited the site he saw two folks sprinting across at the exact location and thinks that it is the most direct path and will be most utilized at that location.

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Chairman Conway mentioned that he'd have liked to see more businesses in the area coming out to support the improvements, especially given how many businesses there are in that area and how many folks are going back and forth across the road. He thanked both folks for coming to speak. He also said that he'd like to consider asking Washington County to consider striping the right turn lane because of the high speeds at that corner because of how wide it is.

Commissioner Berg MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner McClean to approve the staff recommendation to install a midblock marked crosswalk, a raised median island and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons on SW Millikan Way west of Murray Boulevard and the final written order as written.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Berg, Cohen, Conway, McClean and Herring, voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED (5:0).

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Khasho said that there was an open house for South Cooper Mountain plan, the area that was annexed into the City. The open house was about the existing conditions in that area. There were quite a few folks who came with concerns about traffic. Mr. Khasho asked that if anyone is interested in attending any of the scheduled or planned open houses on it, to let him know.

Chairman Conway asked when the next meeting would be.

Mr. Khasho said that there are several coming up and that there are several committees to discuss natural resources, transportation storm water, water, and other pertinent issues. Mr. Khasho said there is a link on the City's web site that has all the information on the plan and the meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The June 6, 2013 Traffic Commission meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

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Teri Cunningham, Traffic Commission Recorder